
THE
Dramatic and Literary Censor.

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THE DUENNA.

(*Concluded from page 231.*)

MRS. BILLINGTON'S CLARA.

AS the public are acquainted with our opinion of Mr. Sheridan's unrivalled Duenna, and our remarks on the Dramatis Personæ, except the part of Clara by Mrs. Billington, which we were obliged to reserve for the present enquiry, from the limited nature of our publication, and in justice to a lady, whose talents and acquirements have generated the admiration of the most polished audience in every Theatre in Europe.

There is not a science which has more votaries than Music; every individual, from the Monarch to the Rustic, feels its powerful influence—It is therefore no wonder that a Be-

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ing who can impart mellifluous tones under the management of a refined judgment, blessed with personal attractions and elegant deportment, should beget in the public mind an unparalleled enthusiasm to behold her, the representative of any character her taste and judgment might direct her to appear in. It is almost unnecessary to observe, that however well a Drama is written, and however happy a performer may be in delineating the sense of the author, yet the part may not admit of that display of ability and that exhibition of person which a character of less literary worth will grant the performer; this we think is the case with the *Duenna*; it does not give Mrs. Billington an opportunity of unfolding those powers, for which she is so celebrated.

The part of Clara denies her those advantages which other Dramas are calculated to licence.

Although we analysed the merits of this Opera in the last number, yet we feel it our duty to express our approbation of such a combination of talents, with which the most refined taste must feel gratified with the elegance and purity of its dialogue, and the beauty of its poetry, and the amateur of sounds regret the conclusion of such harmony.

The result of such powerful attraction was obvious, at the rising of the curtain, in one of the most brilliant and crowded houses ever remembered.

Such attention to talent had its due effect upon the performers in exacting their utmost exertions.

We now return to Mrs. Billington who, was the melodious syren, the very magnet of attraction, (to adopt an emphatic term). As Clara in the *Duenna*, she makes her appearance in a very different light and capacity, from what she does in Mandane in *Artaxerxes*. As Mandane her claims rest entirely on her excellence as a singer, which are indisputable—As Clara, on the other hand, she combines voice and professional talent; as an actress musical capability—here we have to view her in a two-fold light.

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Her delivery of the dialogue certainly does not entitle her to pre-minence of rank; she is too flippant, voluble, and too rapid, and there is a peculiarity of enunciation, which shews too much of the Hibernian accent.

But dismissing the further consideration of this topic—which is involving the most invidious, and ungracious censorial part of our office to dwell on—having delicate reluctance to wound the feelings of individuals.

If we say, discussing this topic, we proceed to investigation of her musical claims, we find ample opportunity for the indulgence of a natural disposition, to approve, admire, and applaud.

The Bravura Song, by Naffolini as a composition, may be entitled to merit commendation, and giving Mrs. Billington an opportunity of evincing her extraordinary power of voice; but it only appears to us a string of words to shew the genius of the composer; It conveys no sentiment—It exhibits no tale of sympathy, and partakes of the "*vox præterea nihil*," and is instantly eclipsed by the beautiful air, which she introduces herself, in the first act—" *Adieu thou dreary pile*,"—is of the first description of excellence, it combines pathos with sublimity in the highest degree, and was given by Mrs. Billington, with a degree of effect, which can only be conceived by those who have witnessed her performance. The grace and embellishments which she annexes to it, possesses the double recommendation of being not only highly scientific and sublime, of perfectly according with and being perfectly congenial in the inherent tenor and character of this charming air.

BRAVURA SONG

INTRODUCED BY

Mrs. BILLINGTON,
COMPOSED BY NASOLINI.

The Words adapted (from the *Italian*)

BY T. DIBDIN.

WHEN the dreadful Tempest ceasing,
Every heart from fear releasing,
Nature's beauties seem increasing,
To each eye that meet the storm;
So we find when quarrels over,
Those, who Cupid's power own,
Love more potent will discover,
And bend lower to his throne.
Jealousy's stern influence ending,
Lover's now no more contending,
To each joy new transports lending,
Passion takes a sweeter form;
No, no, no, no more contending, &c.

Like oil on the flame, a new ardour bestowing,
Affection suspended, its fires fiercer glowing,
With treble warmth exists again,
As Love resumes his pleasing reign.

THE GAMESTER.

COVENT-GARDEN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Beverley, — MR. BROWN.
(From the Bath and Dublin Theatres, being his First
Appearance on this Stage.)

Lewson, — MR. BRUNTON.
Jarvis, — MR. MURRAY.
Bates, — MR. WHITFIELD.
Dawson, — MR. CLAREMONT.
Stukely, — MR. COOKE.

(His first Appearance in that Character.)

Charlotte — MRS. H. JOHNSTON.
Lucy, — MRS. EDWARDS.
Mrs. Beverley, — MRS. LITCHFIELD.

We give the Managers great credit for the production of this Tragedy, as it is some atonement to the public for the numerous, and unmeaning Dramas of the day.

As a piece of deep pathos, pure morality, bearing directly on one of the most predominant and destructive vices of society, coming home to the bosom of men in every station of life, and impressing an important lesson on the mind of every auditor, to avoid Gaming, a practise so alluring, an amusement so dangerous, as it gradually, and imperceptibly infuses into the mind, the most dire principles, contaminates the most refined understanding, and generates that most dishonourable passion of avarice, and those base arts, which deaden the finer feelings, degrade the man, and blast also his pretensions to the character of a gentleman.

The Managers are therefore intitled to our eulogy, for having, in this volatile and prophane age, brought before the public

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lic such a picture of human frailty, to deter the inexperienced youth from a vice which has been the ruin of thousands.

This highly finished play is written in prose, by Edward Moore, and was acted for the first time, at Drury-Lane, in the year 1173. It is considered his best production, the language nervous, and yet pathetic. The plot is artful, yet clearly conducted; the characters are fairly drawn, and highly coloured, yet not unnatural; and the catastrophe is truly tragic, yet not unjust.

Notwithstanding its perfections, it met with indifferent success; the general envy against it being, that the distress was too deep to be borne; yet we are rather inclined to image the reason it did not meet with general approbation, was not the compassion the audience felt for the situation of *Beverley*, but that it was a masterly and energetic attack on their darling vice, their favourite folly, thus vehemently opposed by the strong lance of reason and dramatic execution.

As the *Gil Blas* of this author had been forced upon the town several nights after the strongest public disapprobation of it had been expressed, it was thought by his friends, that any piece acted under his name would be treated with vindictive severity. The Rev. Joseph Spence, therefore, permitted it for the first four nights to be imputed to him, but immediately afterwards threw aside the vizard, as he supposed the success of the piece to be no longer doubtful; some of the very persons, who had applauded it as his work, were among the very first to condemn it as the performance of Mr. Moore. Some part of this tragedy was originally composed in blank verse, of which several vestiges remain.

This piece was resuscitated from its peaceful slumbers, on Friday evening last, to introduce a Mr. C. Brown in the

the character of *Beverley*. As various reports have circulated with respect to this gentleman, and many of them not of the most liberal nature, we think a genuine sketch of his biography will not be unwelcome to our readers.

Mr. C. Brown is a native of Hull in Yorkshire, where he received a liberal education; at a proper age he was articled to an eminent attorney of that city, and at the expiration of his clerkship, he was a highly respectable and much esteemed professor of the law. We have indubitable authority for stating, that had this gentleman continued in the profession, he would have acquired in a few years a very handsome fortune, from having the patronage of the most opulent families in that county.

From his acquaintance with the Greek and Latin poets, and the enlightened and polished society he daily mingled with, we do not feel surprized at his having relaxed from the more serious study of Blackstone to the perusal of works of art. Hence we account for his predilection for Dramatic Composition, and his passion to become the representative of his favourite hero. And as the * Sister Muses had inspired him with enthusiasm to perpetuate their fame, he resigned his legal pursuit, for the Sock and Buskin.

We are sorry we are not in possession of the year, or part in which this gentleman made his *entre* on the Bath boards—but so flattering was the reception he met with in that city, that he got the name of Roscius, by the most learned and polished audience in England.

After he had devoted eight years of his life to the scenic art and having got the esteem and admiration of the inhabi-

* Mr. Brown is by no means a confined actor; he is equally great in Genteel Comedy as he has proved himself in Tragedy.

tants of every principal town in England, Scotland, and Ireland, he bid adieu to the Stage and his native country for life, to resume his legal profession in America.

Perhaps the cause of his leaving his native soil, was a disgust which he took at his mimic life, as his talents had not been brought to this great mart of fame and profit—London.

To follow this gentleman through every scene of life in America, would exceed the limits of our publication.

To enumerate every action which has endeared him to the Americans, would occupy many hundred pages, and every page would raise the readers opinion of his qualities both natural and acquired.

His independent and manly conduct, procured him a seat in the Congress, an assembly composed of men who felt it an honour to proclaim the services he had rendered their country. And there is another trait of a noble and firm mind: The instant he understood that his countrymen had declared war against the Americans, he vacated his seat in the Congress, left a handsome income, and immediately embarked for his native Isle, being proud to boast the name of Englishman; and since his return has gained an honourable subsistence by literary pursuits.

On Friday night this gentleman made his *debut*, in the character of *Beverly*, being his first appearance before a London audience. His animated display of talent must ever entitle him to the support of an English audience.

He considered the character truly in every point, and played it with judgment and feeling. His judgment was evinced in the gradual developement of his energies with the progress of his sorrows, until they reached the greatest depth of woe—Of his feeling every countenance in the house bore weeping testimony. Had the curtain dropt the first act of
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his performance, it might be objected that his voice wanted volume, and his action energy; but as he warmed in the scene, and put forth his strength, he proved his powers fully adequate to the arduous task which he had undertaken. Under the disadvantage attendant upon such a situation, he possessed all the winning elegance of ease, was natural and unaffected in his manner, and seemed perfectly acquainted with the business of the Stage. His action, which was correct, his countenance is expressive, which are requisites peculiarly essential to the character of Beverley, as the text is constantly pointing the attention of the audience to his looks as the index of the horrors that distract his mind. A more faithful picture of despair was never exhibited, than his countenance in the arduous scene which colours the piece, and with it all its sorrows. Uniform applause attended him throughout; in the last scene it was prolonged and reiterated.

The public has so often witnessed Cooke's excellence in characters of subtlety and dissimulation, every body anticipated in him an excellent Stukely. He did not disappoint the expectation—It was a close and correct performance. These two characters are finely drawn for giving strength and effect to each other. The more unsuspecting the one, the more deceit of the other. The hypocrisy of Stukely was plausible and so well assumed, pity for poor Beverley was unenvied by the apparent impossibility of detecting such a consummate knave. There is only one point in which Mr Cook cannot be considered a just portrait of Stukely. He is drawn by the author "a little paltry coward;" accordingly in the contest with *Lewsen* at his lodgings, we find the manly form and countenance of the actor betraying the delusions of the sense.—Mrs. Litchfield is entitled to much praise for her performance of Mrs. Beverley. This lady, possessing clear
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intonation of voice, and forcetful energy, always appears to advantage in strongly impassioned scenes. In that where Stukely insults her honour, she was uncommonly happy in her evpression of wounded pride, and marked the passages with great force and beauty: the last great scene also, as affording considerable scope for her peculiar powers, was one in which she drew down loud applause. Mr. Murray made an admirable Jarvis; and Mr. Brunton, Mr. Whitfield and Mrs. H. Johnston did ample justice to their respective characters of Lewson, Bates and Charlotte.

The evening was so very unpropitious to the Theatrical Exhibitions, that the treasuay of both houses suffered by the storm; except the attraction of Mr. Brown we doubt not but Covent-Garden Company would have played to empty benches. Drury Lane could not boast their expences.

In consequence of the indisposition of Mr. Barrymore, Mr. Caulfield was the representative of *Pizzaro*, and acquitted himself with considerable eclat. It would be unjust to give a rigid critique on the efforts of a performer, who undertakes a part at a short notice, to accommodate the manager and the public. Great allowance ought to be made in such cases, and every encouragement given to the actor under such a pressure of fear, to compensate to feelings agitated, by his painful task.

Mrs. Harlowe offered herself to public notice in the part of *Cora*, in lieu of Miss Biggs, whose ill health would not permit her to grace the boards this evening. Mrs. Harlowe spoke the part with great feeling, and threw into the character all the fire and dignity it would admit of, and withdrew for the evening, amid the plaudits of an elegant audience.

We have often witnessed at the Hay-Market Theatre, her happy delineation of characters in which Mrs. Jordan has deservedly gained so much celebrity. We feel ourselves

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at a loss to account for the inattention of the Managers to her abilities—abilities which might be brought into action, to the satisfaction of the public, and the interest of her employers. We need not offer another sentence to evince our high opinion of this admirable actress.

THEATRICAL RETROSPECT.

DRURY-LANE.

1801.

NOVEMBER.

Thursday, 19. Know your own Mind, Cibber.—Lodoiska, J. P. Kemble.

Friday, 20. Hamlet, Shakspeare.—Of Age To-morrow.

Saturday, 21. Double Gallant, Cibber.—The Flich of Bacon, H. Bate.

Monday, 23. Richard the Third, Shakspeare.—Harlequin Amulet; Or, The Magic of Mona.

Tuesday, 24. The Duenna, R. B. Sheridan.—The Deaf Lover, F. Pelon.

Wednesday, 25. Pizarro, R. B. Sheridan.—The Purse, Crofs.

Thursday, 26. Know your own Mind, Cibber.—Lodoiska, J. P. Kemble.

Friday, 27. Deaf and Dumb, M. Boullon.—Catharine and Petrucchio, D. Garrick.

Saturday, 28. The Duenna, R. B. Sheridan.—The Old Maid, A. Murphy.

Monday, 30. Richard the Third, Shakspeare.—Harlequin Amulet; Or, The Magic of Mona.

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Tuesday.

DECEMBER.

Tuesday. 1. *The Will*, *J. Reynolds*.—*The Lying Valet*, *D. Garrick*.
Wednesday, 2. *Pizarro*, *R. B. Sheridan*.—*The Anatomist*; or, *Sham Doctor*.

COVENT-GARDEN.

1801

NOVEMBER.

Thursday, 19. *The Duenna*, *R. B. Sheridan*.—*Midnight Hour*,
Mrs. Inchbald.

Friday, 20. *Folly as it Flies*, *J. Reynolds*.—*Paul and Virginia*,
Cobb.

Saturday, 21. *The Duenna*, *R. B. Sheridan*.—*The Farm House*,
O'Keefe.

Monday, 23. *Richard the Third*, *Shakspeare*.—*Perouse*.

Tuesday, 24. *Folly as it Flies*, *J. Reynolds*.—*Oscar and Maivina*,
Byrne.

Wednesday, 25. *Merchant of Venice*, *Shakspeare*.—*Love-a-la-Mode*,
Macklin.

Thursday, 26. *The Duenna*, *R. B. Sheridan*.—*Midnight Hour*,
Mrs. Inchbald.

Friday, 27. *The Gamester*, *C. Moore*.—*The Escapes*, *G. Colman*.

Saturday, 28. *Folly as it Flies*, *J. Reynolds*.—*The Wags of*
Windfor, *G. Colman*.

Monday, 6. *Richard the Third*, *Shakspeare*.—*Perouse*.

DECEMBER.

Tuesday, 1. *The Duenna*, *R. B. Sheridan*.—*The Child of Nature*,
Mrs. Inchbald.

Wednesday, 1. *Othello*, *Shakspeare*.—*Love a-la-mode*, *Macklin*.

CATHARINE

CATHARINE AND PETRUCHIO.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

<i>Petruchio,</i>	—	MR. KEMBLE.
<i>Baptista,</i>	—	MR. PACKER.
<i>Hortensio,</i>	—	MR. COOKE.
<i>Grumio,</i>	—	MR. WEWITZER.
<i>Music-Master,</i>	—	MR. MADDOCKS.
<i>Biondello,</i>	—	MR. PALMER.
<i>Tailor,</i>	—	MR. SUETT.
<i>Katharine,</i>	—	MISS DE CAMP.
<i>Bianca,</i>	—	MISS POPE.
<i>Curtis,</i>	—	MRS. MADDOCKS.

We feel infinite satisfaction in having an opportunity to refute a generally received opinion, that Mr. Kemble's dramatic powers are confined to the gloomy muse, that all his attempts to be intimate with Thalia, have proved abortive.

But those who have seen him in the character of *Petruchio*, must allow that his powers are not so narrowed, as the public have been led to believe.

Petruchio is considered as one of the most difficult and arduous parts of any represented on the stage, and requires talents which do not fall to the lot of many performers. Woodward, Palmer, Lewis, and the present subject of remark, are the only gentlemen who have ever gained a laurel in this part.

It is impossible to do ample justice to the just conception, the able delineation, and the masterly touches, which Mr. Kemble has evinced in this fickle character.

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The audience were highly gratified with his versatile powers, and several persons of competent capacity, to give an opinion on any theatrical exhibition, and literary production, have expressed a wish to see Mr. Kemble again soar above himself.

Mr. Wewitzer supported the character of *Grumio*, with a rich vein of humour, that kept the house in a continual laugh, which the audience repaid with repeated plaudits.

Mr. Packer's *Baptista* was respectable, considering his advanced life, which has been spent in the service of the public, he is, therefore, entitled to indulgence whenever he appears on the stage.

Mr. Cook did every justice to the part of *Hortensio*, if he was to pay a little more attention to his treading the stage, he would afford more satisfaction to his auditors.

Mr. Suett acquitted himself to the satisfaction of every person in the house; he has long, and deservedly, been a great favourite with the public in characters of humour.—Old men appear to us to be his happy line of playing.

Miss De Camp's Catherine has only strengthened our opinion of her superior talents; her exertions in this part brought down reiterated bursts of applause, which were bestowed on her by a discerning and elegant audience, who have given repeated testimony of respect and admiration for such extraordinary abilities.

The inferior parts in the piece were performed in a respectable manner, and the whole of the entertainment met with distinguished approbation.

Little Quick, the much-esteemed and celebrated Comedian, has been offered a very liberal salary by his great admirer, Mr. Sheridan, to join the Drury-Lane Cops, but having a prior engagement with Mr. Aickin, to play a few weeks at Liverpool, he is under the necessity of declining it

it for the present ; the refusal was received with reluctance by Mr. Sheridan

The Popes, we understand are engaged by Mr. Sheridan, at a very handsome salary, they make their appearance after Christmas, and we doubt not but they will prove attractive and of considerable service to the treasury of Drury-Lane.

The business, which was to have come before the Chancellor this week, has been postponed till Wednesday, when it is expected to receive a final decision.

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